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Academic Affairs Update, April 2016

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*From the Office of the Provost and
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Academic Affairs Update

University of Northern Iowa



Academic Master Plan Continues Development

In December 2015, Provost and Executive Vice President Jim Wohlpart announced to the UNI community the creation of Academic Master Plan (AMP) vision and mission drafts—results from the fall semester's cross-campus discussion, open forums, and online surveys.

The AMP is purposed as a guide and inspiration for elevating already-strong efforts by the university, supporting development of innovative ideas, encouraging collaboration across university constituents at all levels, and celebrating UNI's distinctions from other institutions.

This semester, the AMP Steering Committee had been incorporating campus feedback into its drafting work, and the consequent vision and mission drafts were divided into four sections: "The University of Northern Iowa (Who We Are)," "Vision (Who We Aspire to Become)," "Mission (How We Will Get There)," and "Core Principles."

In February, the Steering Committee began soliciting additional input on the Core Principles via three Brown Bag events, focusing on Principles "Foster an Engaged and Integrative Learning Environment," "Advance Student Engagement and Success," "Value Faculty and Staff," and "Elevate Diversity, Sustainability, and Community Engagement," respectively.

The February Brown Bag's discussion of balancing statewide-focused efforts with achieving national distinction, for example, was extended during the March Brown Bag session, which discussed Principle "Foster an Engaged and Integrative Learning Environment."

Recognizing the UNI 7

An event organized by a Diversity Advisory subcommittee recently commemorated the 1970 activism of seven UNI students, whose work initiated what today is the Center for Multicultural Education.

Earlier this month, Brave Student Voices: Then and Now engaged alumni, current students, and administration in conversation about historical and contemporary campus climates. Brave Student Voices included both an event meant for students and one for the larger UNI community.



The alumni invited to the event, known as the "UNI 7," were recognized for what Provost and Executive Vice President Jim Wohlpart called "significant contributions ... [that have] become legendary on our campus and [have] inspired generations of students."

"To actually meet and sit down with the UNI 7 and other[activists] was deeply powerful," said Hansen Breitling, a UNI senior in Philosophy. Breitling, a member of Ethnic Student Promoters (an Office of Academic Admissions student organization) has with

March Brown Bag topics also included the future of online and hybrid graduate courses; community engagement activity and resources required to support it; collaboration among not only instructors linked via team teaching but also experiential learning opportunities embedded in curricula; implications of an “engaged and integrative learning environment” for faculty development in relevant pedagogy and for investment in the Liberal Arts Core; public messages that demonstrate how higher education cultivates cognitive abilities; and the relationship among financial implications of educational opportunities such as Study Abroad and these opportunities’ implications for time-to-graduation rates.

The end of April sees the semester’s final Academic Master Plan Brown Bag session.

AMP Steering Committee

Renae Beard
Maureen Clayton
Kavita Dhanwada
John Fritch
Deirdre Heistad
Carolyn Hildebrandt
Tim Kidd
Stephanie Logan
Chris Neuhaus
Patrick Pease
Amy Petersen
Dan Power
Laura Terlip
Kristin Woods

other student leaders been active in awareness-building efforts regarding diversity issues on campus.

“The UNI 7 and others expressed how important it is for students to band together and take care of one another,” Breitling added. “Supporting each other and finding allies who go through unique but similar struggles were both important lessons I learned from my interactions with them.”

One description of the 1970 civil protest led by the students, as well as its surrounding events, is included in William Lang and Daryl Pendergraft’s *A Century of Leadership and Service: A Centennial History of the University of Northern Iowa, Vol. 2: 1928-1976*. After a year of discussion among UNI administration, faculty, and students, and the Board of Regents, in March 1970 thirty-one students held a sit-in at President James William Maucker’s home. Their action was meant to facilitate the creation of a “cultural house” on campus—a discernible location to welcome and support minority students.

Students Ann (Bachman) Burke, Palmer Byrd, Charles Dalton, Jr., Terry (Pearson) Stevens, Joe Sailor, Tony Stevens, and Byron Washington were suspended for leading the sit-in.

Campus and local protests against the students’ suspension led to jail sentencing of some protesters. However, the sit-in participants themselves left President Maucker’s house before an injunction was served to them. As a March 1970 article in the *Northern Iowan* explains, sit-in participants had discussed and decided that a message had been effectively conveyed: that “[they] who c[a]me, stayed, and then left together of [their] own free will.”

Subsequent to the sit-in and protests, a June 1970 vote by the Regents supported the original “cultural house” proposal. The then-UNI Vice President’s (vacant) house became designated as the Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center.

“The importance of connecting current students to these passionate and driven individuals cannot be overstated,” Breitling said. “I think the [Brave New Voices] event will further galvanize students to stay involved and make sure their voices are heard.”



Board of Regents members visit the Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center in 1971 (courtesy of the UNI Archives)

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